

Inspection of City Gateway

Inspection dates:

25–27 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The quality of education | Requires improvement |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Education programmes for young people | Good |
| Adult learning programmes | Good |
| Apprenticeships | Requires improvement |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

Information about this provider

City Gateway is a provider in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Young people and adults follow learning programmes at its two education and training centres in the borough. Most have barriers to employment and over half come from three London boroughs that are among the 10% most deprived local authorities in England.

City Gateway offers traineeship and apprenticeship programmes. There are three traineeship programmes of two, three or six months in length. The provider also offers a 10-week masterclass programme to support trainees with application letters and interviews for jobs. At the time of the inspection, there were 47 trainees, of which 31 were 16- to 18-year-olds and 16 were adults. The apprenticeship programmes are in customer services, events assistance, and business administration. There were 10 apprentices following these programmes. Nine were on level 3 apprenticeships, and one was on a level 2 apprenticeship.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Trainees receive the support and care they need to give them the belief that they can achieve. They feel that they have great opportunities for building their knowledge of what work is about. They continue to receive help to find work after they complete their programme. They find this useful when they are not immediately successful in their next steps.

Trainees benefit from the skills for employment they learn from their teachers and coaches. They like the way teachers approach English and mathematics, especially to help them grasp aspects that they had always struggled to understand. A high proportion of trainees learn knowledge and skills in these subjects, which they remember and apply.

Apprentices have encountered disorganisation in their apprenticeship. Changes in staff and a poorly planned programme have hampered them in gaining the knowledge and skills they need in their job and caused delays for them in completing their programmes. They appreciate, however, that there has been a recent change for the better and staff are helping them to catch up with their studies.

Apprentices, through a range of challenging work tasks, improve their confidence in their abilities. Trainees value the high-quality work placements they go on. These experiences make a real difference to them knowing and understanding the expectations of the workplace. Apprentices and trainees feel safe at the provider and at work, and trust the staff.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a purposeful curriculum to help trainees to improve their employment prospects. The programme includes the right knowledge, skills and behaviours that the trainees need. Leaders and staff plan and teach these in a logical way. At every point in their programme, trainees know what to expect and what they must master to be as effective as possible in work.

The management of the apprenticeship programme has been weak. Senior leaders recognised this, took swift action, and have put in place solid interim arrangements. This action is helping to recover lost time in apprentices' training and remedy the situation. Apprentices note that they feel more confident recently, now that they have the skills to complete their apprenticeship. It is too early to judge whether leaders' actions will mean success for these apprentices.

On the apprenticeship programme, managers and assessors have not implemented the curriculum effectively. They have failed to help apprentices gain knowledge and skills in a logical order. Apprentices have experienced too many changes in staff. Assessors have not linked closely enough with employers to ensure that apprentices develop the technical skills at the right time for their job. Current managers and

assessors are supporting apprentices appropriately, so they catch up. Apprentices are now getting sufficient guidance to prepare them for assessments.

Instructors and coaches work well together to teach trainees the knowledge and skills they need to be more employable. They are successful at helping trainees to gain English and mathematics qualifications. Instructors are adept at explaining concepts and going over aspects that trainees find harder to understand. In this way, instructors periodically reinforce concepts in trainees' minds when they are in danger of forgetting. Most instructors provide useful feedback to trainees to build on their knowledge and skills.

In a small minority of cases, instructors do not set high enough expectations for the quality of trainees' written work. As a result, trainees rush too much when completing written work and the quality is not good enough. Instructors do not pick up and feed back to trainees on the variations in quality or the errors trainees make.

Staff are skilled at helping trainees and apprentices to understand the right behaviours they need for the workplace. For example, they are effective at teaching them the importance of body language and how to communicate appropriately. They give trainees useful instruction on work-like scenarios, such as how to present well to others. They give precise feedback on how to focus on engaging an audience and judge the pace of their presentation correctly. Employers appreciate apprentices' high levels of diligence and commitment. A small minority of trainees are not punctual to lessons. Apprentices have a firm understanding of this work ethic.

Staff help trainees and apprentices develop their character well for the workplace. They teach them resilience to deal with the pressures of work. Staff support them with the varied personal issues that go on in trainees' and apprentices' lives, so they stay focused on their studies. They show them how to manage any mental challenges they have at work. Leaders support trainees and apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively, so they are more self-assured at work.

Trainees and apprentices receive suitable advice and guidance from staff. Staff give them appropriate guidance at the start of their programmes and for their next steps. Many trainees go into further education or employment. A minority go on to sustained employment. Many apprentices stay in work after they finish their apprenticeship.

Leaders and trustees have strong links with employers. These links are of great benefit to apprentices and trainees. Apprentices improve their confidence through the responsibilities that employers give them. As a result, most thrive in employment. Trainees go on work placements that give them a real feel for the work environment.

Leaders provide useful training for staff. The training has a beneficial effect on how instructors implement aspects such as British values in the curriculum. It helps instructors and coaches improve their teaching of trainees with dyslexia.

Leaders have put in place secure governance arrangements since the previous inspection. They work well with trustees, who are highly supportive and have the professional skills to help leaders in their mission. Trustees have helped leaders improve the traineeship provision and safeguarding, for example. Leaders keep trustees up to date on actions they are taking to resolve issues with the apprenticeship provision. Trustees fully appreciate that leaders need to get this right as apprenticeships play an important role in progression routes for trainees. Leaders and trustees use management information well to evaluate provision. They have a clear oversight of performance and act if it slips.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take the correct decisions and actions to keep their learners safe. Designated safeguarding leaders suitably check staff for their appropriateness to work with young people and vulnerable adults. Staff are well trained and can rely on expertise from trustees. Leaders link well with agencies to develop currency in their understanding of safeguarding. Staff care for their learners; they check their safety in all settings and keep an eye on their welfare.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and trustees should make sure that the management of apprenticeships is robust. Managers and assessors need to ensure that apprentices who have experienced delays finish their programme successfully.
- Managers and assessors should ensure that apprentices develop the correct knowledge and skills for the workplace at the right time. They need to organise the curriculum in a logical way to do so.
- Instructors should increase their expectations of trainees' written work. They need to ensure that trainees take more care with their writing. They need to check trainees' work and provide insightful feedback on its quality.

Provider details

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|------------------------------------|--|
| Unique reference number | 58841 |
| Address | The Pavilion Import Building 2 Clove Crescent London E14 2BE |
| Contact number | 07930 668568 |
| Website | www.citygateway.org.uk/ |
| CEO | Mr David Wesson |
| Provider type | Community learning and skills |
| Date of previous inspection | 3–6 October 2017 |
| Main subcontractors | None |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of programmes and principal safeguarding officer as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

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